

## Note

### A new combination in *Centratherum* Cass. (Asteraceae)

*Centratherum* is a small genus in the tribe Vernoniae, subtribe Centratherinae. It was characterised by Robinson et al. (1980) by the leafy outer involucre bracts, long-stalked glands on the corolla, and the pappus being short and caducous, or absent.

It occurs mainly in South America, but it does occur in the Philippines and in Australia. Two taxa occur in Australia; one is native and the other introduced (Kirkman 1981).

Bentham (1867) identified the Australian taxon as *C. muticum* (Kunth) Less. (based on *Ampherephis mutica* Kunth), and this name was applied to Australian material for many years. Kirkman (1981) placed *C. muticum* in the synonymy of *C. punctatum* Cass., a South American species. The type of *Ampherephis mutica* was collected in South America. From the detailed illustration and description included in the protologue, it is clear that *C. muticum* is a synonym of *C. punctatum sens. str.*

Kirkman (*loc. cit.*) described *C. punctatum* subsp. *australianum* for the Australian taxon.

However, I consider species rank is appropriate (see below). I have been unable to find any prior species name applicable to the Australian taxon.

***Centratherum australianum*** (K.Kirkman) A.R.Bean, **comb. et stat. nov.** *C. punctatum* subsp. *australianum* K.Kirkman, *Rhodora* 83: 21 (1981). **Type:** New South Wales. NORTH COAST: west of Wingham on Bulga road, 12 April 1953, *J. Vickery* 23846 (holo: NSW; iso: L (photo!), MO, *n.v.*).

*C. punctatum* and *C. australianum* are similar in several respects. They both have: dimorphic involucre bracts, with the outer ones foliaceous; T-shaped hairs on the branchlets (although the ‘stalk’ is often obsolete in *C. australianum*); caducous pappus comprising sub-plumose ensiform bristles (terminology from Bean 2001); and longitudinally 10-ribbed cypselas. However, they are readily distinguished by several characters (outlined in the key). Furthermore, they originated in different continents, with no opportunity for genetic interchange.

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### Key to *Centratherum* species in Australia

Leaves oblanceolate, with 1–8 pairs of obtuse teeth, occasionally entire; capitulum 8–14 mm diameter; corolla tube glabrous or with a few sessile glands; pappus bristles with <50 pectines, each c. 0.05 mm long . . . . . ***C. australianum***

Leaves obovate, with 10–18 pairs of acute teeth; capitulum 20–25 mm diameter; corolla tube with sessile glands and stalked glands to 0.15 mm long; pappus bristles with >100 pectines, each 0.1–0.15 mm long . . . . . \****C. punctatum***

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*C. australianum* is undoubtedly a native Australian plant. It was collected in 1804 by Robert Brown at ‘Port Jackson’ (now Sydney), and by other pioneer collectors. I have observed it growing in intact non-weedy eucalypt forest away from roads and other disturbance. It is distributed in coastal eastern Australia from Sydney, N.S.W. to Shoalwater Bay, Qld. The alleged occurrence in the Northern Territory shown by Kirkman (*loc. cit.*) is erroneous.

*C. punctatum sens. str.* was introduced to Australia as an ornamental plant in the mid-20th century, and has become sparingly naturalised in northern Australia, from Kununurra, W.A. to Murwillumbah, N.S.W.

Both species are illustrated in the Flora of New South Wales (Porteners 1992).

### References

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**A.R. Bean**

**Queensland Herbarium, Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha, Mt Coot-tha Road,  
Toowong, Queensland 4066.**